

## The Fruit of Transformation

*Living in Light of His Return (2 Thess. 2:13-3:5)*

### Introduction

- This winter storm reminds me of one my family and I experienced right before moved we came to Indiana. It included cold temperatures, lots of snow and lots and lots of ice. The first night the ice came down so hard and so thick that it knocked down hundreds of trees and dozens of power poles. We lived near the top of a large hill and the view outside our windows was like the 4<sup>th</sup> of July with all the powerlines sparking and all the transformers exploding. The next several days were challenging as we struggled to heat our house without any electricity and tried to keep from being swept away by the snow and the ice.
- As Paul wraps up his 2<sup>nd</sup> letter, he addresses 2 interrelated fears.
  - He addresses those who were afraid they had “missed the bus” in terms of Christ’s second coming in 2:1-12.
  - He also addresses those who were afraid of being swept away by the storm of God’s judgment in 2:13-3:5.
- This portion of God’s Word reassures us that **genuinely converted people** don’t need to fear God’s judgment b/c they **will bear the fruit of transformed lives**.
  - These verses include a note of thanksgiving, a prayer, and two prayer requests – an assortment of expressions.
  - In this assortment, we’ll find 3 identifying characteristics of genuinely converted people – so let’s look together.
- I do want to share my personal gratitude, first, to Pastor Mark Howell at the First Baptist Church of Daytona Beach, FL for his outline of this passage.
  - I am dependent on a great number of people and resources as I prepare my messages for you each week.
  - Sometimes, I come across something that’s laid out so well, I can’t improve it, so I’m sharing it with you today.
- So, what are those **characteristics of genuinely converted people**?

### Body

#### I. They are transformed by God’s grace. (2:13-14)

- A. In sharp contrast to those who are deceived by Satan and refuse to believe the truth, Paul restates his thankfulness for their salvation.
- B. His confidence is not based on what they were doing for God, but on what God was doing for them – and still does for His people.
  - 1. **God loves and chooses.**
    - a. His affection and election are gifts given without any merit.
    - b. The move salvation from a subjective state to an objective fact.
  - 2. **God sanctifies and calls.**
    - a. His sanctifying work in our lives is aimed at making us holy.
    - b. His call to us is glorification with Christ, not judgement.
- C. When is a road race won? It’s officially won when the run crosses the finish line. But you could also say that it tactically won every step of the way as the

runner puts one foot in front of the other. Our future transformation is a reminder of the transformation that has already taken place.

#### II. They are guided by God’s Word. (2:15)

- A. Paul urges them to “stand firm” on what they knew from Scripture.
- B. These “traditions” were anchored deep in the bedrock of Truth and would help them weather any storm they encountered.
- C. Our modern mindset is attracted to the new & novel. If it’s newer, it’s automatically better & in some cases that’s right. But that mindset is dangerous if it moves us away from the authority of God’s Word & the truth of the gospel.

#### III. They are secure in God’s salvation. (2:16-3:5)

- A. This final section contains a prayer and prayer requests.
  - 1. He prays for comfort and strength for the Thess. believers.
    - a. This future focus creates a security in the present.
    - b. “If God will preserve me then, He will preserve me now.”
  - 2. He asks for prayer that the Word of the Lord would “spread rapidly.”
    - a. The literal wording is “to run” like a lightning-fast rabbit.
    - b. Paul shared an unshakable confidence in the Scriptures w/ his readers.
  - 3. He also asks for prayer to be rescued from “perverse & evil men.”
    - a. Unbelievers can cause a lot of suffering in the short-term, but their ultimate judgment is confirmed.
    - b. There is a lot of safety in knowing the difference and knowing which group you are a part of.
- This section wraps up with the steadfastness or fortitude of Christ, a truth that illustrated by one of His most well-known parables. The Good Shepherd is good because he knows his sheep, he cares for his sheep, and he protects his sheep against thieves and wolves

### Conclusion

- Paul isn’t writing a full technical manual on salvation here; he’s writing a pastoral quick start guide and he’s pointing out the **characteristic of genuinely converted people – the fruit of a transformed life**.
- There are several ways that you can apply this truth to your life.
  - You can see this as a way to overcome fear in your life.
    - You can identify these characters in your life and you have confidence that you genuinely converted.
    - You don’t have to be afraid about the Day of the Lord so you realize you also don’t have to be afraid about the days ahead.
  - You can see this as a way evaluate your relationship with Christ.
    - Some translations use the term “first fruits” in verse 13.
    - Instead of temporal, the context seems to be talking about progress.
    - The “root” of God’s work will produce the “fruit” described in this passage.
    - Instead of focusing on what you’ve done for God (prayed a prayer, walked an aisle) ask yourself what He’s done for you - ?
  - You can be motivated to live a fruitful life as we anticipate Christ’s return.